

DEDICATED TO THE PROMOTION OF TOWNS COUNTY

OPINIONS & COMMENTARY

From the Desk of:



Child passenger safety

Child passenger safety is an important topic. No one wants their child to be injured in a motor vehicle accident. Not only will improper precautions place a child in harm, but drivers can receive a citation for failing to follow state laws regarding child passenger safety. The following information is a paraphrase of the requirements of the law in Georgia.

Children under age eight are required to be in a child safety seat or booster seat. The seat, or booster, must be appropriate for the child's height and weight. The seat or booster must be used according to the manufacturer's instructions. Generally, children under eight must ride in a back seat, but there are a few exceptions to that requirement.

If a vehicle has no rear seating or all the rear seats are already occupied by other children, a child under eight may ride in the front seat. Still, any child riding in a front seat must be properly restrained in a child safety seat or booster seat appropriate for their height and weight. Drivers should

be aware of the potential of the child receiving serious injury should an airbag deployment occur while a child is riding in the front seat.

When using a booster seat, a lap/shoulder belt is required, but again, there are exceptions. A child over 40 pounds may use only a lap belt if the vehicle does not have shoulder belts, or if positions that have lap/shoulder belts are being used to restrain other children. If there are only lap belts in the rear seat, a child may ride in the front seat. Again, any child riding in the front seat must be restrained in a safety seat that is appropriate for their height and weight. The seat must be used according to the manufacturer's instructions. There remains the potential for serious injury from an airbag deployment that should be understood and considered.

A child over 4'9" in height may be restrained in a safety belt instead of a booster seat. A child under eight can be exempt for physical or medical reasons only if the parent or guardian has a written statement from a physician that a physical or medical condition prevents using a child safety seat or safety restraint system.

As always, it is our desire to help you and your loved ones remain safe. If you have questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to call on your Sheriff's Office. We are always honored to assist you in keeping yourself and your family safe.

The Middle Path

by Don Perry

Just over the mountain from here, in Asheville, NC, several hundred people met recently to tell the Forest Service what they thought of a proposal to consider logging in the Pisgah and Nantahala National Forests. Since the Forest Service announced plans to review management procedures for about 700,000 acres in those forests, opposition to logging has grown and passions are high.

Unfortunately a lot of the passion against logging has thus far been directed at a straw man representation of the Forest Service's position. What they are actually proposing is the creation of new policies that will guide the management of these public lands over the next decade and beyond. Some areas will be considered for logging. Some will be considered for wilderness protection. What they are not proposing is the widespread logging of 700,000 acres. Once suitability studies are completed, the number of acres that will be potentially available for logging and wildlife habitat enhancement will be closer to 300,000.

Three hundred thousand acres is still a rather large patch of ground. It's about three times the size of Towns County, where logging and wilderness protection have long been touchy subjects. When I first moved here full time in the early 1980s, there were still a number of faded bumper stickers around that said, "STOP RARE II - No More Wilderness!" It was RARE II that led to the establishment of the Southern Nantahala and Brasstown Wilderness Areas, among others.

Opinions on protecting wilderness and logging can often be predicted by one's political or philosophical bias. Ironically, many who want to conserve forest the most are politically the most liberal. Those who see the forest primarily as a resource to be developed are often the most conservative. The Forest Service regularly finds itself attempting to strike a balance between extreme opinions, including those who believe that not a single tree should be cut and those who would prefer that there be no public lands at all.

If you have read this column more than twice you know that our middle path tends to detour toward large tracts of roadless wilderness. Nature consistently manages land far better than even our best efforts informed by the latest science. However, Nature works best when she gets to manage the whole show, rather than the patchwork quilt of public and private lands, developed and undeveloped, which now exists. Our roadless and undeveloped lands are surrounded by and intermingled with residential areas, recreational areas, roads and businesses. This means that in order to address issues such as disease and pest control in the forest, fire suppression and wildlife habitat, Nature needs a helping hand. Public lands cannot simply

be abandoned in their entirety to natural processes.

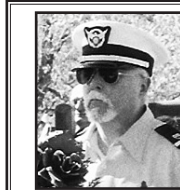
In my opinion, public lands should also not be considered simply as tree farms that occasionally support wildlife and clean water in between timber harvests. Science is very clear on the benefits of natural habitats that support species diversity, on the importance of forests in maintaining healthy watersheds and on the role of forests in mitigating the negative effects of climate change.

One of the go-to arguments for opening up public lands to more logging, an argument which has been used ad nauseum to support a variety of issues with a potential for making money for various interest groups, is the contention that by doing so we will "create jobs." We have heard this argument in Towns County many times over the years. We heard it while we watched the destruction of watershed and the degradation of scenic beauty for the short term benefit of building houses. As I drive through our county today and see the closed businesses, the failed subdivisions and the empty houses for sale, I can hear Dr. Phil saying, "How's that workin' for ya?"

The Bureau of Labor Statistics reported about 44,000 jobs nationally for logging workers in 2012. In North Carolina there were about 6000 logging jobs, including those involved in harvesting pulpwood and lumber from privately held lands. Compare that to the 450,000 North Carolina jobs involved in leisure and hospitality and you can see the basis for the argument that tourism impacts the economy much more than logging. The numbers for Georgia are similarly distributed.

Of course the issue at the heart of today's discussion is the future of forest land which lies mainly in North Carolina. The Land and Resource Management Plan for the Chattahoochee National Forest in our own back yard was released in 2004. But at some point in the future that plan will again be updated and the public will be invited to provide feedback.

At the root of the discussion in North Carolina and in future discussions in our own area will be the opinion about who is better qualified to manage our public lands, and indeed if there should be any public lands at all. Few of us want bigger government in any way, but as I drive around our area and see how the "public" has managed the land and observe how quickly the garbage reappears on the side of the roads and along the trails, I am convinced that the Forest Service will be the better steward. As for logging, there exists a reasonable balance that will continue to preserve old growth areas as well as manage others for sustainability.



The Veterans' Corner

By Scott Drummond, USCG Veteran

Military History/Iwo Jima

The Battle of Iwo Jima from 19 February 1945 to 26 March 1945 marks one of the key offensives by American forces to achieve victory in our WW II effort against the Japanese. This Japanese island is located 650 miles from Tokyo, midway between Japan and US bomber bases in the Marianas. The strategy anticipated was to allow for landing strips on Iwo Jima to accommodate short range escorts for our long range bombers, en route to bombing missions in Japan, to be defended from Japan's air assault by short range escorts. The Japanese didn't care for this American idea too much and had already begun a campaign to defend Iwo Jima to the very last Japanese soldier, with no hope of surrender or retreat, as there was no place to retreat.

American naval forces, about 450 ships, had the island surrounded as never before that time in history, but yet the Japanese, numbering approximately 22,060 and were entrenched in over 16 miles of underground tunnels and interlocking caves. Even though our naval and air forces had commenced heavy shelling and bombing of the island on 15 June 1944, and continuing through the morning of 19 February 1945 our 30,000 Marines of 3rd, 4th and 5th Marine divisions encountered very heavy resistance because the heavily entrenched and fortified caves had provided shelter for the determined Japanese who knew these islands so close to Japan were instrumental to American forces who were just as determined to end this war as the Japanese were to

conquer all American forces. Before it was over we had committed more than 60,000 US Marines, several thousand US Navy Seabees, alongside our US Navy, Army, Air Force, & Coast Guardsmen who represent, to this day the very best of American determination and love of country.

Mount Suribachi, on the south end of this small island where our Marines raised the first flag on this rough volcanic island is often thought of as the final chapter of this horribly expensive piece of real estate. It wasn't the final task of our Marines and our entire amphibious landing forces tough mission. The Motoyama Plateau on the northern end was yet heavily defended and must be taken in order for our forces to completely command and control this soon to be American outpost. As always and forever, our US Marines, in spite of heavy losses completed the arduous task of overcoming Japanese possession of Iwo Jima.

Almost 19,000 Japanese died, only 216 taken prisoner. There were 26,000 US casualties including 6,800 dead. Our Americans have risen to the occasion and always will, in spite of very heavy odds, and despite inevitable broken hearts, wounds to bodies, scars to souls and minds never to be erased. These young men of the Marines, Navy, Army, Air Force and Coast Guard well aware of these hardships in advance, were not deterred, as they knew they were there for our USA, you and I. Never ever forget them; always honor our men and women of our armed forces.

RARE KIDS; WELL DONE

By Don Jacobsen

Q: I have a little boy who is in the third grade. He has always done quite well in school, till this year. Frequently he comes home and tells me his teacher doesn't like him. When I ask him how he knows that, he describes how the other kids get by with things he gets in trouble for. Whenever something bad happens in class she immediately accuses him of being the trouble-maker. My question is, shall I confront her or just ignore it?

A: Do you think she's guilty? Do you think she's being unfair? Do you think she's picking on him unjustly? If they were standing side by side and you asked a question to which each gave different answers, which one would you believe? Which one is the more credible, a third-grader or an experienced 30-something year-old teacher who is accused of treating 29 of her 30 kids fairly, but not this one? Without even hearing from her, I have to tell you I'm starting to lean to her side.

I'm the last to suggest that teachers are perfect; I spent many years in the classroom and I have a train load of close friends in education. I know they are not infallible. But I think you and I would look a long way to find a group

of people with a higher sense of calling. Junior is going to have to be pretty persuasive to convince me that the teacher is the villain in his narrative.

Let me make a couple of suggestions. I would basically ignore Junior's wailing. I would refocus the story to help him understand that he is the fortunate one. All his life he will meet people who won't treat him as he would like to be treated. And already in third grade he has an opportunity to learn what to do. How to get rid of your enemies - by converting them into friends. Some people don't learn that skill early; he is highly favored.

Second, at some future parent-teacher conference I would, just incidentally, ask the teacher if she sees any character issues I ought to be concerned about as a parent. We appreciate your skill as a teacher of our children and we want to do everything we can to make it rewarding for you. Send her a thank you card after the conference and remind her of your inquiry. She'll love it. And so will Junior when he comes back after college graduation and thanks her for being his very favorite teacher.

Send your parenting questions to: DrDon@RareKids.net.

GUEST COLUMNS

From time to time, people in the community have a grand slant on an issue that would make a great guest editorial. Those who feel they have an issue of great importance should call our editor and talk with him about the idea. Others have a strong opinion after reading one of the many columns that appear throughout the paper. If so, please write. Please remember that publication of submitted editorials is not guaranteed.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR SHOULD BE EMAILED OR MAILED TO: Towns County Herald, Letter to the Editor, PO Box 365, Hiawassee, GA 30546. Our email address: tcherald@windstream.net. Letters should be limited to 200 words or less, signed, dated and include a phone number for verification purposes. This paper reserves the right to edit letters to conform with Editorial page policy or refuse to print letters deemed pointless, potentially defamatory or in poor taste. Letters should address issues of general interest, such as politics, the community, environment, school issues, etc.

Letters opposing the views of previous comments are welcomed; however, letters cannot be directed at, nor name or ridicule previous writers. Letters that recognize good deeds of others will be considered for publication.* **Note: All letters must be signed, and contain the first and last name and phone number for verification.**



Community Calendar

American Legion Post 23 meets 1st Tuesday of each month at 4 PM at VFW Post 7807, Sunnyside Rd., Hiawassee. Call 706-896-8387 for details. We need your support!
VFW Fish Fry April - October on 2nd & 4th Fridays each month from 4:30 - 7. \$10 per plate.
Towns County Water Board Meeting 3rd Monday of each month at 6 p.m. in the TC Water Office Building.
Mountain Community Seniors meet the second Thursday of each month at the Senior Center in Hiawassee at 1 p.m.
Towns County Republican Party meets at 6:30 PM the 4th Thursday of each month at the new Senior Center. For more info call 706-994-3919.
Democratic Party of Towns County meets the 2nd Tuesday of each month at 5 PM at the new Senior Center.
Towns County Planning Commission is held the 2nd Monday of each month at 7 p.m. in the Courthouse.
Towns County Commissioners meeting is the 3rd Thursday at 5:30 p.m. in the courthouse.
School Board Meeting, 2nd Monday each month at 7 p.m. in the auditorium.
Hiawassee City Council 1st Tuesday of month 4 p.m., at City Hall.
Young Harris City Council, 1st Tuesday of month at 7 p.m., Young Harris City Hall.
The Unicoy Masonic Lodge #259 meets on the 2nd Monday of the month at 7:30 p.m.
Stevens Lodge #414 F & AM meets the 1st Thursday of each month at 7:30 PM in Young Harris. Sat. morning breakfast 2nd Sat. of each month from 8 - 10:30 AM. \$6 adults, \$3 12 & under.
Towns County Board of Elections holds its monthly meetings on the 2nd Wednesday of each month at 4 p.m. at the Elections Office (Old Rock Jail).
Towns County Historical Society meets the 2nd Monday of each month at the old Rec Center in Hiawassee at 5:30 p.m. 706-896-1060, www.townshistory.org

Bridge Players intermediate level meets at 12:30 p.m. on Mondays & Fridays at the Towns County Rec Center.
Mountain Regional Arts and Crafts Guild, Inc (MRACG) meets the 2nd Tuesday of each month at Daniel's Steakhouse, Hiawassee. The Board meets at 4 p.m., and the Guild at 6. Call us 706-896-0932.
Mountain Computer User Group meets the 2nd Monday of each month. Meetings start at 6 p.m. and visitors are welcome. Details can be found at www.mcug.org.
Chattahoochee-Nantahala Chapter, Trout Unlimited meets 2nd Thursday of each month at Cadence Bank in Blairsville. 5 p.m. Fly Tying - 7 p.m. General Meeting. Everyone welcome. www.ngatu692.com.
Military Officers Association of America (MOAA) meets the 3rd Monday of each month at various area restaurants. For information call John at 706-896-2430 or visit www.moaa.org/chapter/blueridgemountains.
Alcoholics Anonymous: 24 hour phone line 828-837-4440.
Mothers of Preschoolers meets the third Thursday of each month at First Baptist Church of Blairsville from 6 - 8 p.m. Call the church at 706-745-2469.
Chatuge Regional Hospital Auxiliary on the 3rd Monday of each month, except the months of July, October and December, in the hospital cafeteria at 1:30 p.m.
Mountain Magic Table Tennis Club meets 3 p.m. Thursdays at Pine Log Baptist Church Fellowship Hall in Brasstown. Ping Pong players welcome. Call Jerry (828) 837-7658.
The Humane Society Mountain Shelter Board of Directors meets the last Thursday of every month at 5:30 p.m. at Cadence Bank in Blairsville.
The Towns County Alzheimer's Support Group meets the first Tuesday of each month at 1:30 PM in the Family Life Center of McConnell Memorial Baptist Church. For more info call Carol at 706-896-6407.
The Appalachian Shrine Club meets the 2nd Thursday of each month at 6:30 PM at the Allegheny

Lodge in Blairsville. For more info call William 706-994-6177.
GMREC Garden Tours every Monday 9 a.m.-1 p.m.
Shooting Creek Basket Weavers meets the 2nd Wednesday of every month at 10 a.m. at the Shooting Creek Fire Hall Community Center. For more info www.shootingcreek-basketweavers.com.
Friendship Community Club meets the 3rd Thursday of the month at 6 PM at Clubhouse, 1625 Hwy. 76. 706-896-3637.
Goldwing Road Riders meets the 3rd Saturday of each month at Daniel's Steakhouse in Hiawassee. We eat at 11 and meeting begins at 12.
Narcotics Anonymous (NA) meets every Wednesday evening at 7 PM at the Red Cross building on Jack Dayton Circle.
Caregiver support group meets 2nd Tuesday of each month, 3 p.m. at Brasstown Manor, located at 108 Church St., Hiawassee. Call 706-896-4285 for more info.
Enchanted Valley Square Dance Club. Dances 2nd & 4th Fridays at Towns Co. Rec. Ctr. from 7-9 PM. \$5/person to dance. Free to watch.
Brasstown Woodturners Guild meets 1st Saturday of month at 9:30 AM in HHS shop. For more info call J. C. at 706-896-5711.
Mountain Amateur Radio Club (MARC) meets 6:30 PM the 1st Monday of month at 1298 Jack Dayton Cir. (next to EMS), Hiawassee. For info call Al 706-896-9614 after 6 PM.
The Board of the Towns County Chamber of Commerce meet the second Monday of every month at 8 a.m. at the Chamber office, 1411 Jack Dayton Circle, Young Harris.
The Quilting Bee at McConnell Memorial Baptist Church in Family Life Center, Room 216. 1st & 3rd Wednesday of each month from 10 AM - 3 PM. Bring a sack lunch. For more information call Kathy at 706-835-6721 or Marilyn at 706-897-4367.
Mountain Coin Club meets the 2nd Tuesday of each month at 6 p.m. at the North Georgia Tech campus in Blairsville. Guests are welcome. For more info, call 706-379-1488.

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Deadline for the T.C. Herald is Friday by 5 PM

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